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GRoW @ The Wallis Presents
The Wallis Studio Ensemble Production of
RECKONING – A Short Play Festival

RECKONING Features the Work of
Twelve Emerging and Established Writers,
with Three World Premieres and Seven L.A. Premieres
of Unique, Witty and Daring Stories on Contemporary Life

**Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 3, 4, and 5, 8 pm,
and Sunday March 6, 2022, 3 pm**

(Beverly Hills, CA, March 2, 2022-UPDATED) – GRoW @ The Wallis presents The Wallis Studio Ensemble production of *RECKONING – A Short Play Festival*, featuring the work of ten emerging and established writers, with three World Premieres and seven L.A. Premieres of unique, witty and daring stories on contemporary life on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 3, 4, and 5, 8 pm, and Sunday March 6, 2022, 3 pm, in the Lovelace Studio Theater at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

Directed and Choreographed by Wallis Studio Ensemble Artistic Director Madeleine Dahm, the festival's plays, short story, and poem are written by Amy Tofte, Briana Cox, Alex Kingsley, Krysta Gonzales, Eric Lane, Jo Rodriguez, Jaisey Bates, Starina Johnson, Phillip B. Williams and Sam Ambler, and performed by Wallis Studio Ensemble members Kendell Byrd, Rami Campbell, Alan Corvaia, Karlee Foster, Mark Antony Howard, Austin Owens Kelly, Ashley Victoria Robinson, and Taneal Williams. Set design is by Sibyl Wickersheimer; lighting design is by Bosco Flanagan; costume design is by Edina Hiser; headdress, prop fabrication and fight co-ordination by Alexander Sheldon; sound design is by Madeleine Dahm; cultural consultant for *Infinite* is Krysta Gonzales; artistic associate is Kelvin Morales; and production manager is Nicki Heskin. Photograph by Mateusz Klein.

“We hope that the festival celebrates these innovative writers as they illuminate, confront, surprise and delight us with very unique points of view,” says Dahm. “These short plays and

texts average 6 to 12 minutes in length, and it's amazing to see how cleverly the writers have been able to explore complex social issues in such a short amount of time. They offer us humorous and playful commentary, stark warnings, and joyful meditations on what it means to be human. It has been a privilege to dive into these daring narratives, and collaborate with each of the writers."

War by Design - WORLD PREMIERE

By Amy Tofte

A brisk, stylized and absurdist comedy about Ziggy, a new hire in the war department who gradually learns the truth behind the strange lingo of the three suits in charge.

Faces - WORLD PREMIERE

by Briana Cox

This highly charged drama, with something of a 'Twilight Zone' twist, focuses on an apartment complex that descends into violence and paranoia after its once peaceful residents are suddenly unable to recognize each other's faces.

Infinite - WORLD PREMIERE

By Krysta Gonzales

A powerful and celebratory new work, written, developed and created by Krysta Gonzalez, in collaboration with the actors. This play is a text and movement exploration of the endurance of Black Joy.

Sisters Three and the Tree - L.A. Premiere

by Jaisey Bates

An unexpected gathering of three star sisters and their storyteller sibling takes place as they come from afar and try to conjure a tree in order to save a dying planet (ours). A Peoplehood Real Time play, inspired in part by the witches from Macbeth.

Daniel the Brave L.A. Premiere

By Starina Johnson

A startling comedic take on an ancient myth about a young man who searches and finds Medusa, survives, and comes away with a new purpose.

Why We're Here - L.A. Premiere

By Jo Rodriguez

A mysterious drama about a WOMAN who begins a conversation with a stranger on a train. Trapped between the bliss of denial and the fear of inadequacy, the MAN is forced to face the truth of who he has become.

A Bowl of Soup - L.A. Premiere

By Eric Lane

An intimate and moving examination of the bond between two brothers, set at the height of the AIDS epidemic. When Rob can barely speak after the loss of his partner, his brother Eddie visits and tries to get him to talk again.

Bearer Of Bad News - L.A. Premiere

By Alex Kingsley

A daring, corporeal tragedy in which the animals are dying, and 'Bearers' have been tasked with carrying endangered fetuses to term. A 'Bearer' finds new purpose in her pregnancy, but at what cost!

Guiding Light - L.A. Premiere

By Starina Johnson

A clever and inspired comedy that tells the story of the immaculate conception, with a twist.

SHORT STORY

THE PAWNSHOP - L.A Theatrical Premiere

By Sam Ambler

When you're down on your luck and times are hard, and it's been a while since your last fix, what can you do when there's nothing left to sell? Turns out there's pawnshop that'll buy just about anything...

POEMS

Epithalamium and *He Loved him Madly* from *Thief in the Interior* by Phillip B. Williams, Alice James Books, 2016

According to Williams, "I wrote *Epithalamium* in response to the celebration of the legalization gay marriage, considering how the act of getting married dwelled in a space of ambivalence: it both protected a love with legal rights regarding medical and property decisions between partners, but not the bodies/personhoods of those who got married. There is still much work to do and I am not against the idea that gay marriage is a step forward. But for those who cannot choose marriage or who can but who live in places where their coupling can put them in more danger we have to resist complacency and reject insensitivity to critiques of gay marriage being the end-goal. *He Loved Him Madly* is a partial (15-section) pecha kucha for my father, Calvin Ford, and uses titles from Miles Davis compositions (odd-number stanzas) and various Hip Hop and spoken word tracks (even-number stanzas). In order of appearance, artists of the even-number stanzas are Boogie Down Productions, Jay-Z, The Notorious B.I.G., Amiri Baraka, Wu-Tang Clan, Scarface, and Nas. A pecha kucha is a Japanese business presentation form Terrance Hayes converted into a poetic form that typically has twenty sections to explore a particular topic, the subheadings for each topic acting as guides through the possibilities/themes/etc covered in the poem. Mine explores the intersection of my father's battle with addiction and living life during the "war on drugs" and crack epidemic."

Ticket prices are \$25 per person. The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills. To purchase tickets and for more information, please call 310-746-4000 (Monday – Friday, 10 am to 6 pm) or visit TheWallis.org/wosner.

The Wallis is closely monitoring the ever-changing local health and safety environment carefully and addressing known health factors at the moment. Should plans change and any performance be required to be postponed or cancelled or if venue capacity limitations are instituted, ticket holders will be notified immediately with options for their purchased tickets per The Wallis' ticketing policies.

The health and safety of patrons, our staff, and artists inside and outside our venue are a top priority for The Wallis, which is requiring all patrons to provide, upon entry, proof of full vaccination, including proof of a booster shot, or a negative PCR test result within 48 hours or a verifiable Antigen test within 24 hours from your performance date, along with a government

issued photo ID. Facial masks, covering both the mouth and nose, are still required at all times while within the venue. The Wallis' health and safety protocols are also subject to change at the venue's sole discretion or in accordance with LA County and City of Beverly Hills regulations. Our current Health & Safety Protocols and updates may also be accessed at TheWallis.org/Safety.

About the Wallis Studio Ensemble

The Wallis Studio Ensemble is a dynamic, groundbreaking theater company for early-career actors who are committed to exploring innovative theater practices and to creating bold theater that serves as a galvanizing force for social change. The Ensemble crosses boundaries and, with an ethos of collaboration, creates thoughtful and provocative work that is rooted in examining humanity.

About the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:

The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. The campus, located in the heart of Beverly Hills, CA, is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 300 dance, theater, opera, classical music, cinema and family programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed as “au courant” (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, “If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis.” Its programming has been nominated for 79 Ovation Awards and nine L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GRoW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is led by Chairman of the Board Michael Nemeroff and Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer Rachel Fine.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: TheWallis.org.

For downloadable photos, please visit: TheWallis.org/Press.

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EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

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Epithalamium* and *He Loved him Madly

from *Thief in the Interior* by Phillip B. Williams, Alice James Books, 2016

Director and Choreographer: Madeleine Dahm

Set Design: Sibyl Wickersheimer

Lighting Design: Bosco Flanagan

Costume Design: Edina Hiser

Headress and Prop Fabrication: Alexander Sheldon

Sound Design: Madeleine Dahm

Fight Co-ordinator: Alexander Sheldon

Artistic Associate: Kelvin Morales

Production Manager: Nicki Heskin

Cultural Consultant for *Infinite*: Krysta Gonzales

Actors:

Kendell Byrd, Rami Campbell, Alan Corvaia, Karlee Foster, Mark Antony Howard, Austin Owens Kelly, Ashley Victoria Robinson, Taneal Williams

RUN TIME:

Approximately two hours, plus a 15-minute intermission.

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PLEASE NOTE:

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